
Georgia Chapter**American Academy of Pediatrics**

May 2, 2017

Page 1 & attachment

Blastfax & Email !**It's Official! Gov. Deal Signs FY 2018 State Budget; Includes 3rd Phase of Medicaid Increases to Physician Practices**

Yesterday morning, Governor Nathan Deal signed into law the FY 2018 budget. Included in it was \$17.9M in state funds to increase 76 additional CPT codes to 2014 Medicare levels. The budget also included funds to increase four OB-Gyn codes as well. These increases, which the Governor himself had proposed, mark the third year in a row Medicaid rates have been raised to Medicare levels. This brings to a total of 108 common CPT codes--used in both general pediatrics and subspecialty pediatrics--that will now be paid at Medicare levels.

Secondly, and importantly, the budget bill also allocates funds and directs Dept. of Community Health to open a new period of Attestation for the new rates effective July 1, 2017. This is intended to correct the current Medicaid policies that limited the increases to only those PCP's who attested in 2013 and 2014 for the ACA increases; and also making providers ineligible if they merely moved their office or opened an additional office(s) after January 1, 2015. We were also very pleased that the budget also added funds in the Medicaid program for children with autism and for other behavioral health services. The plans for those funds have not yet been released, but we look forward to working with the Department on this very soon.

Thanks are due to Governor Deal and leaders in the General Assembly, particularly the Appropriations leaders, who advocated for these increases. They understood that a strong primary care physician workforce is essential to Georgia's economic growth and development. And that this is especially true in rural parts of our great state, where Medicaid volumes in primary care practices are often high. Finally, please take time this summer to thank your state senator and representative for supporting these efforts. It does make a difference!

For more information, contact Rick Ward, at 404-881-5091 or rward@gaaap.org.

Ben Spitalnick, MD
President

Melinda Willingham, MD
Chair, Legislative Committee

Hugo Scornik, MD
Chair, Medicaid Task Force

Hope to See You This Friday!

Ga. Pediatric Practice Managers & Pediatric Nurses Spring Meeting

Ga. International Convention Center, College Park

May 5, 2017



For immediate release
May 1, 2017

Office of Communications
(404) 651-7774

Deal signs FY 2018 budget

\$25 billion plan prioritizes education, child welfare and law enforcement

Gov. Nathan Deal today held budget signing ceremonies across the state for next year's \$25 billion state budget. The legislation, HB 44, will support Georgia citizens by funding initiatives in education, human services, public safety, state infrastructure and other key areas. This budget is based on a 3.5 percent increase in general fund revenues over FY 2017, reflecting Georgia's sustained economic growth.

"The FY 2018 budget maintains Georgia's position as a national leader in conservative fiscal management and further strengthens our top priorities: quality education for all children, public safety in our communities, an economy that continues to generate jobs and an infrastructure system that supports a growing population," said Deal. "With this budget, we are working to make Georgia a better place to live, work and play by investing in public safety personnel, teachers and others responsible for ensuring the safety of Georgia's children. Georgia has enjoyed sustained economic growth and this budget lays the foundation for continued short-term and long-term success. I commend the General Assembly for working with me once again to balance the budget while addressing the issues that matter most to Georgia's citizens."

HB 44 invests more than \$516 million in new funding for K-12 education, including allocations of more than \$156.8 million for enrollment growth, training and experience, and \$85.8 million for the Quality Basic Education Equalization program to assist low-wealth school systems. Also included is \$160.1 million in funding to provide a 2 percent increase to the state base salary schedule for certified personnel, school bus drivers and school nurses. The budget also provides additional funding for the Teachers Retirement System to ensure teachers' pensions maintain strong financial footing.

The FY 2018 budget also invests more than \$96 million in the Department of Human Services child welfare services programs to ensure that those who care for our most vulnerable citizens have the resources necessary to provide safe, caring environments for children in need. Of this funding, \$25.9 million will provide 19 percent pay increases for child protective services employees to assist the department in recruiting and retaining staff, and \$31 million will provide per diem rate increases for foster parents and relatives caring for children.

The budget includes \$55.2 million in addition to funding allocated in the Amended FY 2017 budget to provide a 20 percent salary increase for law enforcement personnel, as well as salary increases for criminal investigators and public safety trainers. This increase has already had a significant impact in recruiting new officers for the Department of Public Safety, as the Department has received twice as many trooper applications as usual since the increase was announced in September.

As a result of continued revenue growth from HB 170, the Georgia Department of Transportation will receive an additional infusion of \$162.6 million to help maintain the state's roads and bridges. This is in addition to the \$100 million already included in this year's capital funding package to supplement bridge repairs and improvements. To date, HB 170 has generated more than \$1 billion in new funding each year to expand and maintain Georgia's road and bridge network.

Additional FY 2018 budget highlights include:

- \$115.4 million for performance incentives for high-performing employees or for employee recruitment and retention initiatives.
- \$222.5 million to meet actuarially determined employer contributions to the Teachers Retirement System.
- **\$20.8 million for autism services for children served by Medicaid and \$17.9 million for primary care and OB/GYN Medicaid providers.**
- \$11.8 million to annualize a provider rate increase for the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program.
- \$25.9 million for 500 additional NOW and Comprehensive waivers, bridge funding and housing vouchers.
- \$79.4 million for the University System of Georgia for resident instruction.
- \$20.5 million for the Move on When Ready program.
- \$11.3 million in bond funds for the Technical College System of Georgia to purchase world-class lab equipment.
- \$36.4 million to construct and equip a new crime lab for the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in Savannah.

The fiscal year begins July 1.